3RD ALL-ORISSA DRAMA FESTIVAL

The 3rd All Orissa Drama Festival under the auspices of the Orissa Sangeet Natak Akademi was celebrated at Berhampur, the second biggest town of Orissa from the 6th to the 10th of May, 1959. The plays were performed at the Khallikote College Quadrangle on a well-decorated stage. The first and the second Drama Festival of the Akademi were held at Cuttack, when some full-length dramas were staged. The Akademi decided to make the 3rd Annual Drama Festival, a festival of one-act plays. Thirty original scripts were received by the Akademi submitted by the different amateur theatre-groups of Orissa. The plays dealt with some modern problems. Fifteen scripts were selected for the festival by a Screening Committee consisting of three eminent persons, appointed by the Executive Board of the Akademi. The duration of each play was limited to 45 minutes when staged and the number of actors and actresses in each play was limited to ten. As such, three plays were staged every night, during all the five days from the 6th to the 10th of May, 1959. Shri Lingaraj Panigrahi, Ex-Minister of Education, Orissa, and the President of the Akademi, inaugurated the festival. Five judges were appointed to adjudge all the fifteen plays and to select the best play, the best actor, the best actress and the best director for award of prizes by the Akademi.

In the 1st and the 2nd Drama Festival almost all the participating parties were from the city of Cuttack. But in the present Drama Festival, theatre-groups from Balangir, Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Puri and Cuttack districts in addition to those from the Cuttack city participated. This shows how enthusiasm and keen interest for theatrical performances have developed among the public during the past few years. The parties also displayed a better standard of performance than before. The high histrionic talents of some of the actors and actresses were really commendable.

The main object of holding the Annual Drama Festival is to give an impetus to the development of the Oriya Drama and the theatre and to create a favourable atmosphere in the State for drama, music and dance. The best group, actors, actresses, directors, dramatists, and a juvenile artist are being awarded cash prizes and medals by the Akademi for encouragement in the field of theatrical art. Orissa is one of the few States in India where there are three professional theatre parties, staging plays daily.

Though the 3rd Annual Drama Festival of the Akademi was held for the 1st time outside Cuttack it was a grand success at Berhampur. Thousands of spectators witnessed the festival daily with admiration and interest. In this festival the following plays, actors, actresses, directors, juvenile artists and dramatists have been adjudged for Akademi Awards.

1. Best Play. —'*Anasana*', (hunger-strike), staged by the Rupamancha, Cuttack.

   2nd Best Play —'*Bhasa Megha*', (Flouting cloud), staged by the Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.

   3rd Best Play. —'*Ghara Thakura*' (The deity of the home), staged by the National Music Association, Cuttack.

2. Best Actor. —Shri Hemantakumar Das, who played the role of 'Sadhucharan' in the play *Kita*', staged by the Neo, Cuttack.

   2nd Best Actor. —Shri Saratachandra Pujari, who played the role of 'Manisankar' in the play, '*Chhadma Besi*', staged by the Prajatantra Prachar Natya Sansad, Cuttack.

   3rd Best Actor —Shri Akshayakumar Mohanty, who played the role of 'Bibhuti' in the play

'*Nilakantha*', staged by the Natya Bharati, Cuttack.

3. Best Actress. —Shrimati Laxmipriya Mahapatra, who played the role of 'Radha' in the play '*Bhasa Megha*', staged by the Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.

2nd Best Actress—Shrimati Allhadini Pattnaik, who played the role of 'Kusuma' in the play '*Gotie Rati*', staged by the Ramachandi Yubak Sangha and Pathagar, Puri.

3rd Best Actress—Shrimati Binapani Das, played the role of 'Bhauja' in the play '*Anasana*', staged by the Rupamancha, Cuttack.

4. Best Director —Shri Khagendranath Mitra, who directed the play, '*Bhasa Megha*', staged by the Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.

2nd Best Director—Shri Nityananda Palit, who directed the play, '*Ghara Thakura*', staged by the National Music Association, Cuttack.

3rd Best Director—Shri Krupasindhu Mohanty, who directed the play, '*Samasya*', staged by the Kala Mandir, Cuttack.

5. Best Child Actor—Shri Biswamaya Kar, who played the role of 'Nilakantha' in the play, '*Nilakantha*', staged by the Natya Bharati, Cuttack.

6. Writer of the best play —Shri Manoranjan Das, the the author of the play, '*Anasana*', staged by the Rupamancha, Cuttack.

Arrangements for board and lodging were made by the Akademi for the members of the participating parties in the premises of the Khallikote College, Berhampur.

It has been decided by the Akademi that the best party and the other winners of prizes will be invited to a special function proposed to be held at New Capital, Bhubaneswar or at Cuttack, where the winners will be awarded prizes as decided by the Akademi.

The total expenditure of the festival is about Rs. 9,000/-.